

In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) An instrument for cutting tissue guided along a guide wire comprising:

a proximal end having a housing;

a shaft extending from said housing to a distal end of the instrument, said shaft having with an opening at said distal end;

a guide tube extending from said distal end through said opening;

a path through at least said guide tube ~~along said shaft and said housing~~ for extending a guide wire; and

means for longitudinally cutting tissue having a blade extendable and retractable through said opening of said ~~shaft distal end along said guide tube~~, wherein said guide tube extends through said opening of the shaft beyond said distal end and said blade, when retracted, to define a path along which said blade is extendable and retractable.

2. (original) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said longitudinally cutting means provides a cut of a predetermined depth and width.

3. (original) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said longitudinally cutting means further comprises means at said housing coupled to said blade for remotely controlling the extending and retracting of said blade at said distal end.

4. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein ~~said guide tube is stationary in said distal end, and~~ said longitudinally cutting means further comprises a blade shuttle attached to said blade having a longitudinal channel within which said guide tube is located to linearly guide said blade shuttle travel at said distal end.

5. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 4 wherein said longitudinally cutting means further comprises:

a pivotal actuator member at said housing; and

one or more drive rods or tubes each having a distal end coupled to said blade shuttle and a proximal end coupled to said actuator member in which pivoting of said actuator member controls said extending and retraction of said blade shuttle.

6. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein when a guide wire is extended along said path for extending said guide wire, said distal end is located adjacent tissue along said guide wire to be cut when said blade is extended.

7. (original) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said shaft is extendable through an endoscope.

8. (currently amended) An instrument for cutting tissue guided along a guide wire comprising:

a shaft extending to a distal end of the instrument, said shaft having with an opening at said distal end;

a ~~stationary~~ guide tube extending from said distal end through said opening for receiving a guide wire ~~into said shaft~~; and

a movable blade shuttle having a blade, said blade shuttle having a longitudinal channel ~~for within which~~ said guide tube is ~~located~~ to enable said guide tube to linearly guide said blade shuttle travel at said distal end when said blade shuttle is extended from said opening or retracted back through said opening, wherein said guide tube extends through said opening of the shaft beyond said distal end and said blade shuttle, when retracted, to define a path along which said blade shuttle is extendable and retractable.

9. (original) The instrument according to Claim 8 further comprising a housing coupled to said shaft and means for remotely controlling movement of said blade shuttle at said distal end to cut tissue.

10. (original) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said shaft is rigid or at least partially flexible.

11-14. (cancelled)

15. (new) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said shaft is positionable in a tubular tissue structure through which said distal end of the instrument is guided by the guide wire along the path for extending said guide wire, and said blade when extended provides the longitudinally incision along a narrowed region of the tubular structure.

16. (new) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said guide tube is stationary with respect to said shaft.

17. (new) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said path for extending the guide wire extends through said housing, said shaft, and said guide tube, and then exits said guide tube.

18. (new) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said blade has a sharp edge, and said means disposes said blade to extend longitudinally along said path defined by said guide tube to enable said edge of said blade to cut tissue when said distal end is adjacent the tissue to be cut.

19. (new) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said blade when extended cuts tissue located outside of said instrument.

20. (new) The instrument according to Claim 8 further comprising:  
a housing coupled to an end of said shaft opposite said distal end;  
a pivotal actuator member at said housing; and  
one or more drive rods or tubes each having a distal end coupled to said blade shuttle and a proximal end coupled to said actuator member in which pivoting of said actuator member controls said extending and retraction of said blade shuttle via said opening.

21. (new) The instrument according to Claim 8 further comprising a pathway through at least said guide tube and said shaft for extending a guide wire.

22. (new) The instrument according to Claim 21 wherein said guide wire is extended along said pathway to locate said distal end of the instrument adjacent the tissue to be cut by said blade, and said blade shuttle is extended and retracted along said path to enable said blade to extend outside said instrument to cut said tissue.

23. (new) The instrument according to Claim 8 wherein said guide tube is stationary with respect to said shaft.

24. (new) The instrument according to Claim 8 wherein said blade has a sharp edge, and said blade shuttle is disposed to extend along said path defined by said guide tube to enable said edge of said blade to cut tissue when said distal end is adjacent the tissue to be cut.

25. (new) An instrument for guided cutting of tissue comprising:

a distal end;

a shaft extending to said distal end;

a blade at said distal end for cutting tissue; and

a guide member extending from said distal end beyond said shaft in which said blade is disposed for traveling along said guide member out from said shaft to cut tissue located outside of said instrument.

26. (new) The instrument according to Claim 25 wherein said guide member is tubular for enabling a guide wire to extend there through.